

# Judicial Offices

## Here's What You Should Know

### **What judicial candidates can say**

Two types of information are shown for each judicial candidate listed in this pamphlet:

1. A brief biography, supplied by the candidate, which includes the candidate's background and professional experience.
2. A brief, unedited statement, written by the candidate, about why you should vote for that individual.

Candidates' statements are governed by Canon 7 of Washington's Code of Judicial Conduct. The Code bars judicial candidates from making statements that appear to commit them on legal issues likely to come before them in court. The Canon also specifies that a candidate may not make misleading or untruthful statements.

### **How we select judges in Washington State**

**Nonpartisan Election:** Originally, judges in Washington State were elected in partisan elections. This was changed in 1912 and since that time judges have been selected by nonpartisan election.

**Appointment:** When a justice of the Washington State Supreme Court or a judge of the state Court of Appeals or a superior court resigns or dies during a term of office, the Governor appoints a new judge to fill that position. The appointed judge must run in the next election.

All judges who complete their terms and wish to serve another must stand for a nonpartisan election.

### **The importance of primary elections**

Candidates for the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and Superior Courts who are unopposed or who receive more than half of the votes in a primary election are thereby elected to the position. But if there are three or more candidates, and no one wins more than half the votes cast, the two with the most votes must face each other in the November general election.

**Supreme Court** (The successful candidate may be determined in the primary): The state's "court of last resort," the Supreme Court hears appeals from the Court of Appeals and other lower courts. Through its rule-making authority, it also administers the state court system.

Three of the court's nine justices come up for election every two years. Justices serve six-year staggered terms.

**Court of Appeals** (The successful candidate may be determined in the primary): The Court of Appeals hears most of the appeals that come up from the county-level superior courts. A total of 22 judges serve the court in three, multi-county divisions headquartered in Seattle, Tacoma and Spokane. Candidates run in one of three county groupings, or districts, within each division. Only voters registered within their districts can vote for them. Judges serve staggered, six-year terms.

**Superior Court** (The successful candidate may be determined in the primary): Superior courts are the state's courts of general jurisdiction. They hear felony criminal cases, civil matters, dissolutions (divorces), juvenile cases, and appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction. They are organized by county into 32 judicial districts. Candidates run in the county or counties within their district, and only voters within that district can cast ballots for them. Judges serve four-year terms.